**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A fast-deployable light-weight tripod, comprising
a) a center support for supporting a load, provided with three peripheral hinge members;
b) three multi-stage telescoping leg assemblies each attached to one of said hinge members, each leg assembly comprising at least two compression-resistant members interconnected by a telescopic joint;
c) at least one cam locking unit associated with each telescopic joint, each locking unit having a first engaged position preventing relative axial movement which would shorten the length of said leg assembly, and a second disengaged position wherein said assemblies are free to move in either axial direction, each locking unit being urged towards its engaged position for automatic locking of said tripod in its deployed position with said cam locking being effected by pressure on said cam unit from its associated extended leg; and further comprising
d) a hand accessible release element for each leg assembly for independently releasing said at least one cam locking unit associated therewith, thereby enabling the shortening of the length of said assembly.

2. A tripod according to claim 1, further comprising a foldable hinged three-arm restriction member hingedly attached to said legs to prevent excessive spread of said leg assemblies.

3. A tripod according to claim 1, wherein said cam locking unit allows extension of legs while in its engaged position.

4. A tripod according to claim 1, wherein the locking force provided by said cam locking unit when in its engaged position automatically increases as weight load increases on said center support.

5. A tripod according to claim 1, wherein each leg assembly comprises three compression-resistant members interconnected by an upper and a lower telescopic joint.

6. A tripod according to claim 5, comprising at least one cam locking unit associated with each telescopic joint, each locking unit having a first engaged position preventing relative axial movement which would shorten the length of said leg assembly, and a second disengaged position wherein said assemblies are free to move in either axial direction, and wherein said cam locking unit allows extension of its associated leg assembly while in its engaged position and wherein said hand-accessible release element arranged to disengage said lower telescopic joint is connected to a linkage arranged to simultaneously disengage at least one cam locking unit controlling said upper telescopic joint.

7. A tripod according to claim 6, comprising a further hand-accessible release element for releasing a cam locking unit only at said upper telescopic joint.

8. A tripod according to claim 7, wherein said further hand-accessible release element is a press button.

9. A tripod according to claim 6, wherein said hand-accessible release element disengaging a cam locking unit at said lower telescopic joint is an external lever disposed on an inner face of said joint.

10. A tripod according to claim 9, further comprising a foldable hinged three-arm restriction member hingedly attached to said legs to prevent excessive spread of said leg assemblies, wherein said hinged three-arm restriction member, is when folded, positioned to substantially, simultaneously press against each of the release levers associated with each of said legs, thus disengaging cam locking units on all legs at both telescopic joints, whereby the tripod can be folded and retracted without the need for separate manual release of any of said locking devices.

11. A tripod according to claim 2, wherein the arms of said foldable hinged three-arm restriction member are telescopically extendible, operation of each restriction member telescopic joint being controlled by a further cam locking unit.

12. A tripod according to claim 1, wherein each of said cam locking units is provided with spring means urging each of said units towards its engaged position.

13. A tripod according to claim 1, wherein a shoe member is interposed between the cam of said cam-locking unit and the leg tube with which it is in contact.

14. A tripod according to claim 1, wherein each pressure-resistant member comprises at least one plastic, fiber-reinforced tube12.

15. A tripod according to claim 14, wherein said fiber-reinforced tube is reinforced with carbon fibers.

16. A tripod according to claim 1, able to support a 30 kg load at a height of 1.5 meters and weighing no more than 3.4 kg.